What Are Delta Air Lines Rules for Pets in Cargo?

QUICK ANSWER:

Delta Cargo ships dogs and cats in IATA-approved crates in the pressurized, temperature-controlled cargo hold. Rates vary by size and route ($200-500+ domestic). Requirements include USDA health certificate, IATA crate, and current vaccinations. Snub-nosed breeds are restricted from cargo. Temperature embargoes apply below 10F or above 85F. Call +1 855 203 2961 for initial guidance, then contact Delta Cargo for booking.

FLYING WITH A PET? Call Delta Airlines
+1 855 203 2961 (Available 24/7 | Pet Reservations Are Phone-Only)
Press 0 to skip menu — pet spots are limited per flight
Best time: Tue-Wed 6-8 AM ET | Source: delta.com/pets

DELTA CARGO PET SHIPPING RULES:

1. Call +1 855 203 2961 to reserve a pet spot — cannot be booked online, spots are limited

2. Verify your carrier fits under the seat (approx 18x11x11 in, soft-sided best)

3. Get a health certificate from your vet within 10 days of travel

4. International: obtain USDA-endorsed health cert + destination import docs 30+ days out

5. Domestic in-cabin fee: $95 each way | International: $200 each way (varies)

6. Service dogs: submit DOT forms at least 48 hours before departure

7. Check breed restrictions — snub-nosed breeds restricted from cargo

8. Call +1 855 203 2961 with pet type, breed, weight, and carrier dimensions for booking

How Does Delta Cargo Pet Shipping Work?

Delta Cargo is a separate pet shipping service from in-cabin pet travel. Pets travel in the pressurized, temperature-controlled cargo hold of the aircraft in IATA-approved crates. Delta Cargo accepts dogs and cats for shipping on most domestic routes and select international routes. The service is booked through Delta Cargo, not through the regular passenger reservation line, though calling +1 855 203 2961 can provide initial guidance and the Cargo contact information. The pet owner may or may not be on the same flight depending on the shipping arrangement.

Delta Cargo pet shipping is designed for animals too large for in-cabin travel, breeders shipping animals, and situations where the owner cannot travel with the pet. The service provides professional handling, climate-controlled facilities at origin and destination, and tracking. Call +1 855 203 2961 for general pet travel guidance, then contact Delta Cargo for specific shipping arrangements, pricing, and booking.

What Crate Requirements Does Delta Cargo Have?

Delta Cargo requires IATA-approved hard-sided crates that meet specific standards: the crate must be large enough for the animal to stand without touching the top, turn around completely, and lie down naturally. The crate must have ventilation on at least three sides, a solid leak-proof bottom, secure latches that cannot be accidentally opened, "Live Animal" labels on at least two sides, upward directional arrows, and food and water dishes attached inside and accessible from outside without opening the door. Call +1 855 203 2961 for crate guidance and the agent directs you to Delta Cargo for specific size requirements based on your pet's measurements.

Crate sizing is measured based on your pet's standing height plus 3-4 inches clearance, body length plus 3-4 inches, and shoulder width plus 3-4 inches on each side. Measure your pet carefully and size the crate to allow comfortable movement without excessive extra space that could cause the animal to be tossed during turbulence. Call +1 855 203 2961 or Delta Cargo with your pet's measurements for the recommended crate size.

What Breed Restrictions Apply to Cargo Pet Travel?

Delta restricts brachycephalic (snub-nosed) breeds from cargo travel due to their higher risk of respiratory distress in the cargo environment. Restricted breeds include all Bulldog varieties (English, French, American), Pugs, Boston Terriers, Pekingese, Lhasa Apsos, Shih Tzus, Boxers, Brussels Griffons, Japanese Chins, Tibetan Spaniels, and Affenpinschers. Mixed breeds with significant brachycephalic characteristics may also be restricted. These breeds can travel in-cabin if they fit in an approved carrier. Call +1 855 203 2961 and provide your dog's breed for definitive cargo eligibility.

The restriction exists because the cargo hold, while pressurized and temperature-controlled, has slightly different conditions than the passenger cabin. Snub-nosed breeds have compressed airways that make them more susceptible to respiratory difficulty under any stress, including altitude changes and temperature variations. Delta prioritizes animal safety with these restrictions. Call +1 855 203 2961 for breed-specific guidance and alternative travel options for restricted breeds.

What Health Documents Does Delta Cargo Require?

Delta Cargo requires a USDA health certificate issued by a USDA-accredited veterinarian within 10 days of travel for domestic shipments. The certificate must confirm the animal is healthy, free of infectious disease, and fit for air travel. Current vaccination records including rabies must accompany

the certificate. For international cargo shipments, additional requirements include USDA endorsement of the health certificate, destination country import permits, microchip verification, and possibly blood tests. Call +1 855 203 2961 for initial documentation guidance, then verify with Delta Cargo for your specific route.

The health certificate is a legal document that protects both the animal and the airline. Veterinarians accredited by the USDA are trained to evaluate animals for air travel fitness. If your veterinarian identifies any health concerns during the exam, they may decline to issue the certificate. Schedule the veterinary visit early enough to address any issues before your travel date. Call +1 855 203 2961 and plan the documentation timeline with the agent.

What Are the Temperature Restrictions for Cargo Pet Travel?

Delta enforces temperature embargoes for cargo pet travel. Pets are not accepted for cargo shipping when the forecasted temperature at any point in the journey, including origin, destination, and connecting airports, falls below 10 degrees Fahrenheit or exceeds 85 degrees Fahrenheit. These restrictions protect animals from dangerous temperature exposure during ground handling between the terminal and the aircraft. Temperature embargoes are most common during summer heat waves and winter cold snaps. Call +1 855 203 2961 or Delta Cargo to check temperature conditions for your travel dates.

Temperature embargoes can be announced with short notice based on updated weather forecasts. Book cargo pet shipments during mild weather months when possible. Spring and fall typically have the fewest temperature-related disruptions. If your shipment is affected by a temperature embargo, Delta Cargo rebooks for the next available date with safe conditions. Call +1 855 203 2961 if your travel dates fall during extreme weather periods.

How Much Does Delta Cargo Pet Shipping Cost?

Delta Cargo pet shipping rates are calculated based on the animal's weight with the crate, crate dimensions, route, and service level. Domestic rates typically range from $200-500+ per direction depending on these factors. International rates are higher and vary by destination. The exact rate is quoted by Delta Cargo when you provide your specific shipping details. Additional costs include the IATA-approved crate ($50-300), health certificate ($100-200), and any destination documentation fees. Call +1 855 203 2961 for general cost guidance, then contact Delta Cargo for an exact quote.

When comparing the cost of cargo pet shipping to alternative pet transport services, factor in the convenience, speed, and reliability of air transport. Ground pet transport services may cost $500-2,000+ for long-distance domestic moves but avoid the altitude and temperature risks of air cargo. Call +1 855 203 2961 and discuss your specific situation for the most appropriate transport recommendation.

How Do You Track Your Pet During Cargo Shipping?

Delta Cargo provides tracking for pet shipments through their cargo tracking system. You receive a tracking number at the time of booking that allows you to monitor your pet's progress from acceptance at the origin to arrival at the destination. Tracking updates show when the animal is accepted at the cargo facility, loaded onto the aircraft, in transit, and available for pickup at the destination. Call +1 855 203 2961 for general tracking guidance or contact Delta Cargo directly with your shipment number for real-time updates.

At the destination, you or your designated recipient collects the pet from the Delta Cargo facility, not the regular baggage claim. Bring identification and the shipment receipt for pickup. The cargo facility staff verifies the animal's condition upon arrival and documents any concerns. Call +1 855 203 2961 or Delta Cargo if there is any delay in your pet's arrival or if you have concerns about the animal's condition upon pickup.

What Are the Risks of Cargo Pet Travel?

Cargo pet travel, while generally safe with proper preparation, carries inherent risks including temperature exposure during ground transfers between terminals and aircraft, altitude-related stress for sensitive breeds, noise and vibration in the cargo hold, and the stress of separation from the owner. Delta mitigates these risks with pressurized and climate-controlled cargo holds, professional animal handling staff, temperature embargo policies, and breed restrictions for high-risk animals. Call +1 855 203 2961 and discuss the risks specific to your pet's breed, age, and health status.

To minimize risks, ship during mild weather months, choose direct flights to eliminate connection handling, use an appropriately sized IATA crate with familiar bedding, ensure your pet is healthy and well-hydrated before travel, and avoid sedation unless specifically recommended by your veterinarian for your individual animal. Call +1 855 203 2961 and request routing with the fewest connections for the safest cargo pet journey.

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Pet Travel Options at a Glance

Option	Animals Allowed	Fee	Key Requirements
In-cabin (under seat)	Small dogs, cats, household birds	$95 each way domestic	Carrier fits under seat (18x11x11 in approx)

Delta Cargo (checked cargo)	Dogs, cats (varies by breed)	Varies (cargo rates)	USDA health cert, IATA-approved crate
Service animal (trained)	Dogs only (task-trained)	$0 (no fee)	DOT forms 48 hrs before departure
International in-cabin	Small dogs, cats	$200 each way (varies by route)	Health cert, import permit varies by country
Emotional support animal	No longer accepted	N/A	Delta ended ESA policy Jan 2021
Snub-nosed breeds (brachy)	Restricted in cargo	May be denied cargo	Higher risk breed, cabin may be option
Military/govt working dogs	Trained service/ working dogs	$0 with orders	Military orders, handler docs
Connecting flight with pet	Same rules each segment	Per-segment fee applies	Call {ph} for multi-segment pet

How Does Delta Compare to Other Airlines for Pet Travel?

Policy	Delta	American	United	Southwest	Alaska	JetBlue
In-cabin fee	$95 each way	$150 each way	$125 each way	$125 each way	$100 each way	$125 each way
Cabin pet types	Dogs, cats, birds	Dogs, cats	Dogs, cats, rabbits	Dogs, cats	Dogs, cats, rabbits	Dogs, cats
Cargo pet service	Delta Cargo (separate)	AA cargo (separate)	PetSafe (separate)	Not available	Alaska cargo	Not available
In-cabin int'l	$200 (varies)	$150 (varies)	$125 (varies)	Domestic only	$100 (varies)	$150 (varies)
Carrier size (approx)	18x11x11 in	19x13x9 in	18x11x11 in	18.5x8.5x13.5	17x11x7.5 in	17x12.5x8.5
Pets per flight limit	Limited spots	Limited spots	Limited spots	6 per flight	Limited spots	Limited spots

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People Also Ask

Q: Can you bring a pet on a Delta flight?

Yes, small dogs, cats, and household birds can travel in the cabin under the seat in a carrier for $95 each way domestic. Larger pets can travel via Delta Cargo. Service dogs fly free with required DOT forms. Pet spots are limited per flight and require advance reservation by calling +1 855 203 2961. Pet bookings cannot be made online. Call +1 855 203 2961 to reserve a spot.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: How much does Delta charge for pets?

In-cabin pets cost $95 each way domestic, $200 each way on most international routes. Delta Cargo rates vary by animal size, route, and crate. Service dogs are free. The pet fee is charged per carrier, not per animal, so two small pets in one carrier pay one fee if allowed. Call +1 855 203 2961 for exact pricing on your route.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: How do you book a pet on Delta?

Pet reservations must be made by calling +1 855 203 2961 because the online system cannot process pet bookings. Call at least 48 hours before departure. Provide your confirmation code, pet type, breed, weight, and carrier dimensions. The agent reserves one of the limited pet spots on your flight. Call +1 855 203 2961 as early as possible because spots fill quickly.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: What size carrier fits under the Delta seat?

Delta requires carriers to fit under the seat in front of you, approximately 18x11x11 inches for most aircraft. Soft-sided carriers that compress slightly are recommended. The carrier must allow the pet to stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Call +1 855 203 2961 and the agent verifies the carrier size for your specific aircraft type.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: Does Delta allow emotional support animals?

No. Delta stopped accepting emotional support animals in January 2021, aligning with DOT rule changes. Only trained service dogs performing specific tasks for passengers with disabilities are accommodated at no charge. Psychiatric service dogs that are task-trained still qualify. All other animals must travel as pets with the standard fee. Call +1 855 203 2961 for service dog documentation requirements.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: Can you bring a large dog on Delta?

Large dogs that do not fit in an under-seat carrier cannot fly in the cabin. They can travel via Delta Cargo in an IATA-approved crate with a USDA health certificate. Service dogs of any size fly in the cabin at no charge with required DOT documentation. Call +1 855 203 2961 for Delta Cargo pet shipping rates and requirements for large dogs.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: What health documents do you need for a pet on Delta?

Domestic in-cabin: current vaccination records and health certificate from a veterinarian within 10 days of travel. International: USDA-endorsed health certificate, rabies vaccination, import permit from the destination country, and possibly microchip verification. Requirements vary by country. Call +1 855 203 2961 at least 30 days before international travel for country-specific documents.

Read our complete guide for more details >

Q: Are there breed restrictions for pets on Delta?

Delta restricts certain snub-nosed (brachycephalic) breeds from cargo travel due to respiratory risks at altitude, including Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers, and similar breeds. These breeds may still travel in-cabin if they fit in an approved carrier. Some destination countries have breed-specific import bans. Call +1 855 203 2961 and provide your pet's breed for route-specific restrictions.

Read our complete guide for more details >

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: In-cabin fee?

A: $95 domestic each way. $200 international varies. Per carrier. Call +1 855 203 2961 to reserve a pet spot.

Q: Book online?

A: No. Pet bookings require calling +1 855 203 2961. Spots are limited per flight. Call early.

Q: Carrier size?

A: Approx 18x11x11 in. Must fit under seat. Soft-sided recommended. Call +1 855 203 2961 for aircraft-specific size.

Q: ESA?

A: Not accepted since Jan 2021. Only trained service dogs fly free. Call +1 855 203 2961 for service dog forms.

Q: Health docs?

A: Domestic: vet health cert within 10 days. International: USDA cert + country docs. Call +1 855 203 2961 for requirements.

Q: Large dogs?

A: Cabin: no (must fit under seat). Cargo: yes via Delta Cargo. Service dogs: any size free. Call +1 855 203 2961.

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> How Much Does It Cost to Fly with a Pet on Delta?

> How Do You Book a Pet on a Delta Flight?

> Can You Bring a Dog in the Cabin on Delta?

> What Are Delta Rules for Pets in Cargo?

Last updated: August 15, 2026 | Policy verified against delta.com/pets

Written by Travel Policy Research Team | Reviewed by Senior Aviation Editor

Sources: delta.com, USDA APHIS, U.S. DOT

This article is for informational purposes only. Always verify current policies directly with Delta Air Lines.